# A New Sort of Main Street

"Hello, dearie, how about trotting the last long mile with me?"

A NEW sort of Main street has grown up in this country. It is found, not in the small towns of the plain states, but in the big cities. The larger the better, the more pronounced will be their Main street flavor.

This is the anthology of such a town—52nd street in Philadelphia is a shining example of it.

You must lean against the wall of the drug store with the corner policeman on Saturday night to know all who pass. The uniformed one has stood on that same corner for a long time and can tell the history of the little tailor shop across the way, or can spin the yarns that the old sailor in the cigar store spins every night of the year.

The policeman's stories come in snatches, but if you listen long enough you can hear him tell what's behind

Pietro, the roast chestnut vendor, scowls so that no one will bring back the chestnuts that are not good.

## The Large Cities Now Harbor Small Towns in Their Midst

every doorway, and mostly what's behind every smile, real or painted, that passes. He does it this way:

**The Dance Hall.**

That's where the young crowd begins the evening. You notice the girls go in by themselves, and the boys come along later. It's cheaper that way. If they go in couples the boys have to pay the girls' wardrobe charge, so they just agree to meet upstairs by the orchestra. Everybody buys his own ticket and then pairs up later on. If a fellow does happen to take a girl, the bunch knows it's his pay-day.

If you don't have a partner you can get one as easy as frostbites in Winter. Just stand around and look like a reception committee. The girls talk to each other with the elaborately unconcerned air of one who reads a book upside-down. They act as though they didn't care if they ever danced again. The boys stand around and stare at them with an amused expression which says, "I'll let you wait awhile, kid; it does you good. But I'll say I'm worth waiting for."

Finally they do get together and dance off. There is no six-foot rule in that hall. If you don't mash your cheek against your partner's the management thinks there's something wrong with the music.

**The Back Row at the Movies.**

It's too bad the whole theater can't be a back row. As things stand now, Bill Briggs has to wear out his shoes trying to get to Sally Jones' house by 7 o'clock Saturday night, so they can get to the movies early. Sally's father objects to her rushing away from dinners and wonders why on earth they can't go later. Naturally, the pair do not explain that there isn't a chance to get on the back row after 7:30. In case they miss, it is necessary to sit down front, where everybody can see Sally parked against Bill's shoulder. Such an exhibit competes with the comics in affording amusement. This is embarrassing. Much better to be on the back row, where there are no eyes boring into the back of your neck. But alas, the back row is too small for the number of Bills and Sallys, so the only thing to do is fight a way in early.

**The Ice Cream Parlor.**

Here you find them after the dance or the movies, their noses mixed with the straws in tall glasses of chocolate soda, or their chins daubed with spinnings of marshmallow from one of those sundaes that try to beat the weekly hash fo variety of contents.

It is considered witty for the fellows to say to the girls, "Come on and drink a sundae, or let's take a bite out of a soda." The first wit who said it ought to be proud of himself. Such wise remarks are like popular songs—if they take well everybody sings them.

It's just as important to walk on the west side of Fifty-second street as it is to select the south side of Chestnut street. There, if you have a new dress, it will be seen by the people for whom you put it on. There you parade with any new masculine acquisition you happen to have caught during the week.

It's hard to tell the mob reasoning that makes a crowd of people think life is alluring if they walk on the west side of the street and dismally uninteresting if they take the opposite side. But you couldn't convince the strollers on Fifty-second street that one pavement is just as good as another since it was constructd by the same company.

In any event the street is a gaudy highway ablaze with lights. It acts like a magnet on the rows and rows of houses in the dim streets beyond the lights, dragging from their upholstered armchairs people of every age. They come eager for excitement, for brilliance, for anything that will give a grand finale to the week.

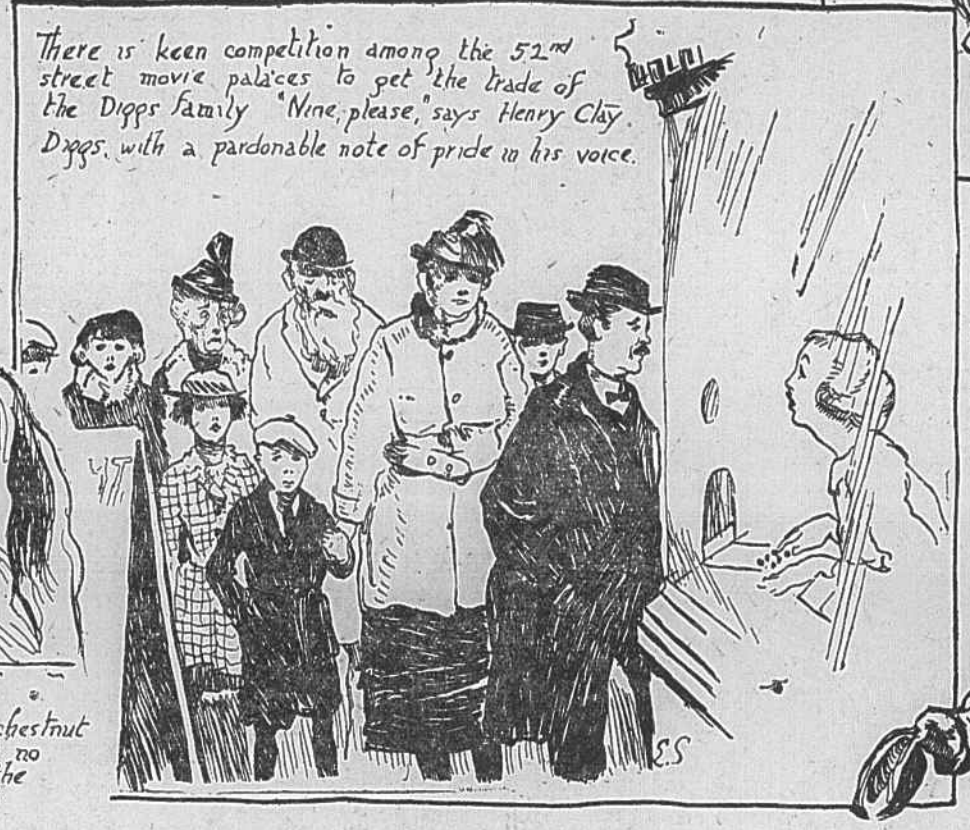
**The Town Gossip.**

She's a combination of a local who's who and an unexpurgated copy of the Young Ladies' Christian Herald. She edits the first edition at the fruit stand on Saturday night.

To the 52nd street flapper no Saturday night is complete unless she can bury her nose in a soda-glass!

(Courtesy Philadelphia Record)

There is keen competition among the 52nd street movie palaces to get the trade of the Diggs family. "Nine, please," says Henry Clay Diggs, with a pardonable note of pride in his voice.



"Good evening, Miss Jones," she says. "Aren't these fine oranges? I'll take two. No, just two. Mr. S. won't eat oranges since all these deaths have come from ripe olives—if from olives, why not oranges, says he?"

All this in the most casual manner. Suddenly she becomes confidential and her listeners realize the main feature is on.

"Myra Miller has left her husband!

No street is without its quota of beggars.

Oh, yes, it's true. Her husband says to her, he says, 'Three dinners in a row we've had salmon.' 'What do you want?' says Myra, 'an alycart meal?' Myra begins to cry and he swears awful and she threw sumpin'—I heard it smash—and then I see her going down the street with her grip. It's a shame, I say, and probably it'll be all over the street tomorrow.

"Well, I'm thankful Mr. S. is even-tempered. He is, you know, except when he has hay fever. Speaking of hay fever, I hear that Mrs. Fetterman's daughter's little girl has blood-poisoning.

"It's too bad about Myra, though I saw it comin'. A man can't serve two masters, I say. Is those my oranges? Twenty-five cents for two oranges! Take 'em back. I guess Mr. S. is right in not eatin' oranges."

**The All-Night Restaurant.**

Joe keeps the corner oyster shop where life is especially vivid until midnight. The little restaurant beckons to wistful appetites through a plate-glass window with an apparently candid eye. "The only dark secrets of my existence," it seems to say, "are to be found in my kitchen. I know the mysteries of hash and croquette."

Joe has enemies. They are to be found in the ranks of the godly folk who go to the Sandstone Church on Sunday and whisper behind their silk gloved hand that if there is a secret in Joe's life it is to be found in the cellar. You can see for yourself that people go into Joe's looking utterly forlorn and they come out laughing.

Everybody knows Joe. He is the spiritual adviser to that part of the community which does not go to the Sandstone Church. He knows, wise man, that you can't comfort the broken-hearted or reason with a law-breaker until the inner beast is fed. Let Joe serve up a sloshing plate of clam chowder or a plate of chicken pie. Then, leaning on one elbow, he'll listen to the latest quarrel you had with your wife or anything else you want to confess.

"Well," Joe says at the end of the narrative, "I'll not say you're right nor I'll not say you're wrong, but if it was meself, mind you that had taken Mrs. Swarzenfelder's baby coach from her porch last night, thinkin' that she'd never miss it and that it would be just the thing to wheel bottles home with, I'd put it back and say politely that in the dark I'd mistaken it for a pushcart."

They all do what Joe tells them. His shop is the center of all discussion on art and literature and the world politic that Fifty-second street knows. In the excitement of the last disarmament powwow Heinie Swarzenfelder swallowed an unusually large mouthful and cut himself in the throat.

The cop pries himself loose from the drug store wall. It is a quarter of 12 and the streets are clearing. The irresistible hand of the clock changes the street to the ordinary small town street after midnight. All that is left is the newsboy crying an extra, the plaintive wail of a peanut whistle, and a footstep or two passing by.

## Sky Riding in Alaska

YOU have heard of the tales of the Northern Lights and of the men of '98. Truly thrilling have been the escapades of those mighty Argonauts of the north who challenged the glacial trails in quest of the stuff called gold. Many a picture has been painted of placer mine and salmon cannery in that land of the frozen north. But what do we know of the bucket ride, of the trip through the clouds to Bonanza, Jumbo or Mother Lode?

Not so long ago, one dozen newcomers, or "cheechakos," as they called us, stepped from the Copper River Railroad train 200 miles in the interior of Alaska. We had come from "outside," from the states. Our purpose, you would guess, was to earn the almighty dollar. On this cold, dark February morning we had at last arrived at our destination, a copper mining camp in the heart of Alaska.

The three mines, Bonanza, Jumbo and Mother Lode, are miles apart, and each one is about five miles from the main camp, where the mill and the families are located, which is our starting point.

As we reached the top of the hill in going toward the tramway to get our respective buckets to the mines, my partner, a rangy Texan, suddenly exclaimed, "Look at them little specks! Ah reckon them's cows!" My eyes followed his finger. Far in the distance could be seen little dark objects moving in procession toward us. They resembled a squadron of airplanes in single file formation. Then as we turned to the left the black dots seemed larger as they drew towards us. Finally we reached the tram house where we saw they were a line of buckets laden with their precious cargo of copper ore, broken-down machinery or a human being.

I was not due to go up for a few minutes, hence I spent the interval in learning something about the tram house. The tram boy was emptying one of the buckets into a large hole in the rear of the place. Immediately as each ore load was deposited, the bucket was shoved around to the outgoing cables.

Covering myself with an army blanket, Indian fashion, I was helped into a little iron bucket shaped like a bathtub and somewhat like a laundry basket, though about half the length of either. Attached to the top of the little "iron hoss" was a clamp-like arrangement which was attached to the cables when the buckets were in motion. Huddled in this peculiar shaped excuse for a car, I felt about as comfortable as a package-laden husband in a crowded street car.

**The Start.**

Without much ceremony the shift boss or "hard-boiled Tommy," as he was called, gave my bucket a little shove. A sudden jerk, and bucket, army blanket and I were scooting skyward into realms of our feathered friends of the wilderness. We were climbing upward, upward at an angle of about 30 degrees, although it seemed like 60. Head to the rear, legs hanging loosely from the front of the little iron carriage, I felt like a helpless steer going to the slaughterhouse. My heart was where my tonsils used to be and except for my loose-hanging feet I was as tense as a doe at bay.

The cables took a downward trend towards a secluded valley. I had not attempted to look below as per instructions, but this earthbound movement of the 'bus gave me the opportunity to view this valley. I was still several hundred feet above the white land when again my heart began to jump and the fear monsters seized me at a new thought.

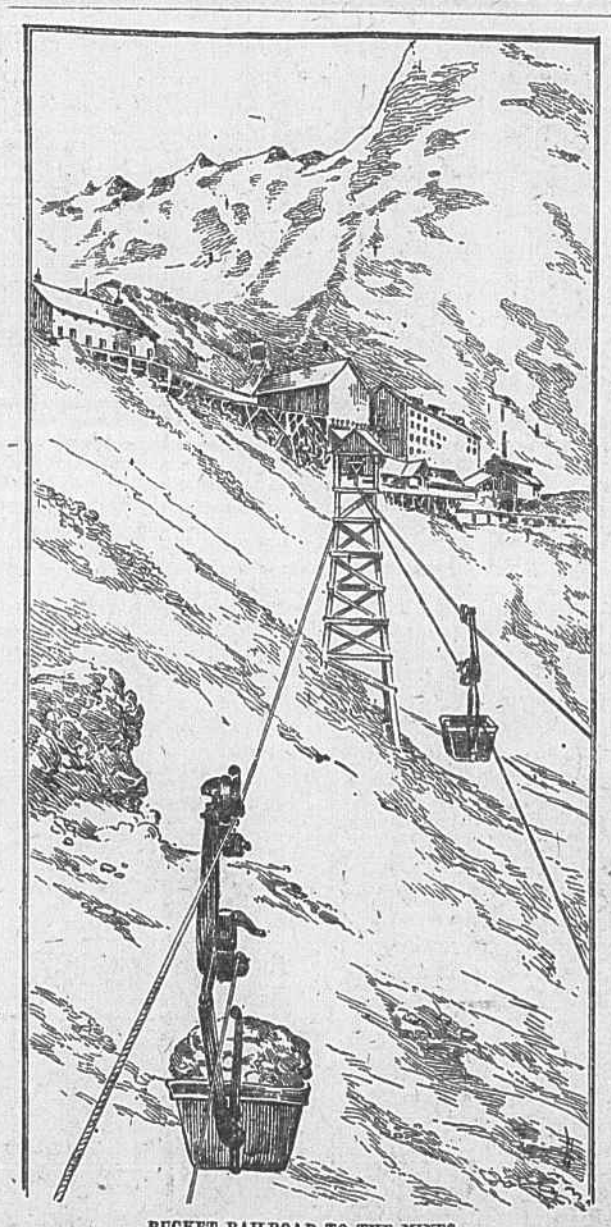
What if the bucket, a hundred feet behind me with its several tons of iron, should become unclamped on the down grade? What would I do when that tremendous weight should ram the stern of my little boat?

A little house was soon descernable, and I felt that all my troubles were over. It was the relay station, and I would again see a human being.

There was a quick good-by and I was again off on my 40-minute ride to Bonanza, feeling quite brave and reckless for "Skinny" had assured me that it is seldom that anyone is killed on the "lines."

I ventured a look below. Silent valleys covered with crystal snows hid from all their treasures of timber and precious metals.

And at last my bucket slowly climbed the last few feet to Bonanza, my destination.



BUCKET RAILROAD TO THE MINES

## The Young Lady's First Poem

A YOUNG lady took her first poem to the local newspaper office, and in her shyness entered the advertising instead of the editorial department. She handed the poem to the brisk young man behind the counter, and he proceeded to count the words in it briskly, tapping each word as he counted it with his pencil.

The poem ran like this:

THE LAST DAY.

As the sun sank to rest that evening
My hopes turned to ashes and dust,
And the future will bring me but grieving
For he who hath broken his trust,
And the day that has gone shall be ever
The last that I ever shall know
Of joy and of loving for ever.
And the future is clouded with woe.

"That's all right—very nice," said the brisk clerk. "It's 56 words at 3 cents a word—$1.68 for one insertion. Will that be enough?"

The young lady blushed and smiled.

"Why," she said, I hadn't thought of fixing a price. Do you really think it's worth all that?"

"Every cent of it," said the clerk firmly. "It'll bring him back to you sure. Quite a pet he was, I'll bet. Too bad you lost him!"

"Sir!" said the young lady, and her eyes flashed with astonishment and anger.

"What color was he?" proceeded the clerk. "We might put that in, you know. Black? Yellow? Brown?"

"I always thought editors were gentlemen," hissed the young lady. "Excuse me. It was my mistake."

And she rushed out of the office in a wild rage.

"By gosh!" said the clerk to himself as he read the poem over again. "By gosh. 'The Last Day,' hey? I thought it was 'The Lost Dog.' I guess it ain't a lost and found ad., after all. I guess it's a literary poem."